



GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

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What is a gifted and talented student?

The Annotated Code of Maryland § 8-201-8-204 outlines provisions for gifted and talented education in the state. Maryland defines a gifted and talented student as “an elementary or secondary student who is identified by a professionally qualified individual as having outstanding abilities in the area of: general intellectual capabilities; specific academic aptitudes; or the creative, visual, or performing arts.”

What is the structure of gifted and talented programs in Maryland?

Gifted and talented education is under the direction of each local school system’s board of education. Services are selected for appropriateness in helping students develop their gifts and talents in a variety of ways, and are provided through differentiated curriculum, differentiated instruction, advanced-level classes, enrichment activities, mentoring, Saturday classes, and summer opportunities. Contact your local school principal, counselor, or your local board of education’s coordinator of gifted and talented education for specific program information.

How are students identified for gifted and talented education services?

All school systems use multiple ways to identify students in order to include as many as possible. Procedures may include a combination of academic achievement, original solutions to real problems, auditions, portfolios, interviews, achievement or aptitude tests, or classroom observation.

How are services funded?

Funding is provided primarily through the local board of education. Each school system is eligible to apply to the Maryland State Department of Education for a Program Development Grant to supplement local funds. They may also apply for incentive grants to help develop or maintain innovative programs for gifted and talented students and for competitive grants to conduct one of many Maryland Summer Centers that are located throughout the state.

What kind of assistance is available to local school systems from MSDE?

MSDE offers technical support to educators of gifted and talented students, both on-site and in other settings. MSDE administers:

- Program Development Grants, a formula grant that is awarded to all local school systems
 - Governor’s Excellence in Education Incentive Grants
 - Maryland Summer Centers Program of summer enrichment
- Maryland Summer Center applications are available from school guidance personnel, the local coordinator of gifted and talented education, or MSDE’s website at www.msde.state.md.us.

***What is being done
to assure
continued growth
and development
of gifted and talented
education in Maryland?***

Coordinators of gifted and talented education are being trained to utilize the Pre-K – Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards published by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) in 1998. These standards embody the Criteria for Excellence document developed in Maryland in 1983 and align closely with the recommendations made by Maryland educators in 1994 for achieving world class standards in educating gifted and talented students. The Governor's Commission on Gifted and Talented Education on Maryland, along with the State Advisory Committee and the Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education (MCGATE), is examining services to students across the state and will soon recommend strategies for addressing the barriers jeopardizing gifted and talented education in Maryland.

***How can parents
become involved?***

Ask your local board of education if there is a local parents advocacy group you can join. MCGATE, the statewide advocacy group, is active in gifted and talented education issues and welcomes new members. The association sponsors the annual Maryland Gifted and Talented Education conference in October, where participants learn more about gifted and talented education and share ideas with other parents. Become directly involved with your children at home and participate in enrichment experiences at your child's school. Work with your school PTA and serve on school-based and board of education committees working on gifted and talented issues. Volunteer to share with students your experiences in your special area of expertise as part of your school's enrichment program for students.